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SUBJECT: EU LIKELY TO EXPAND ZIMBABWE SANCTIONS

11. (U) EU Foreign Ministers appear ready to expand the list of Zimbabwean officials under EU sanctions when the ministers meet July 22 at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC). Working level negotiators from the 27 EU member states have agreed to add some 37 individuals to the existing list of 131 Zimbabweans subject to visa bans and asset freezes, according to contacts. They also plan to freeze assets of four Zimbabwean companies controlled by sanctioned officials. The EU also plans to tighten travel ban exemptions to require approval from all 27 member states, instead of the currently required majority, before a sanctioned individual could travel to Europe for an international conference. A move to sanction spouses and children of sanctioned officials has so far failed to gain consensus, according to a French contact.

Widespread political consensus

12. (SBU) The EU-27 have been unified on expanding sanctions. Working level officials have been preparing options papers on sanctions and other measures since February, but there was no political appetite to impose them before the second round of the presidential election on June 27. Since that time, however, there has been little doubt that the EU would proceed with expanded sanctions. The European Commission has argued at working level meetings against sanctions, saying they will impede dialogue. Member states, however, believe the sanctions are warranted and may pressure the Mugabe regime to take political negotiations more seriously. The July 22 GAERC is the first since MDC candidate Morgan Tsvagirai withdrew in the face of state-sponsored political violence and Mugabe declared himself the winner. High Representative Javier Solana, Commissioner Louis Michel and two EU presidencies - Slovenia, which stepped down June 30, and France, which took over July 1 - all have issued strong statements condemning the June 27 election. Michel called it a "sham" and "an exercise in power-grabbing." Solana said the election outcome "cannot be regarded as legitimate." French FM Kouchner has said publicly that the EU will not recognize any Zimbabwean government that is not headed by Tsvangirai, who received more votes than Mugabe in the March 29 round of presidential voting. Key questions still being debated among the member states are whether the Foreign Ministers will explicitly call for recognition of Tsvangirai as head of state. The French Ambassador to the Political and Security Committee said France wants to put the EU on record in favor of respecting the results of the first round of the presidential election. Some member states, however, favor endorsing a government of national unity or a transitional government leading to new elections.

Other measures ahead

13. (SBU) The EU's first step will be to expand the list of those

under asset freeze and visa ban sanctions, since that is a relatively easy process that can be accomplished before the August EU vacation period, contacts said. In September, the EU plans to consider additional measures. Possibilities include a ban on EU investments in Zimbabwe, a prohibition on the export of luxury goods to Zimbabwe, bans on EU bidding on public sector procurement contracts, and restrictions on diplomatic contacts above the level of Political Director, according to a UK contact. A proposal by Italy to have the rest of the EU member states follow its lead in recalling their ambassadors to Harare fell flat, with member states deciding it was better to have as many international eyes and ears on the ground as possible.

Comment

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¶4. (SBU) Perhaps most interesting from the July 22 GAERC will be the extent to which foreign ministers follow either the African Union line of endorsing a government of national unity (sharing power between ZANU-PF and the MDC) or Kouchner's line of calling for a Tsvangirai-led government.

End comment.

SILVERBERG

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